

UFO INVESTIGATOR



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Interesting Case Discovered Recently In N.H.

Saturday evening, May 13, 1972, was a perfect night for four young boys to camp out in eastern New Hampshire. The stars were out and there was a slight breeze blowing from the south.

The youngsters had just settled down beneath a partially constructed chicken coop located in a large field near their home when, suddenly, they were frightened by a strange-shaped buzzing object with fiery exhaust that appeared to be approaching their location.

The fictional opening to a spine-tingling science fiction thriller? No! It is a small portion of a recent UFO case investigated by NICAP's Massachusetts Subcommittee, under the direction of Chairman Raymond E. Fowler.

Two factors make this case stand out as an interesting addition to the NICAP files: First, the unusual description of the UFO supplied by the witnesses. Second, the similarity in certain shape and flight characteristics between this case and one which occurred in New Hampshire in 1966 (see *UFO Investigator*, March 1972).

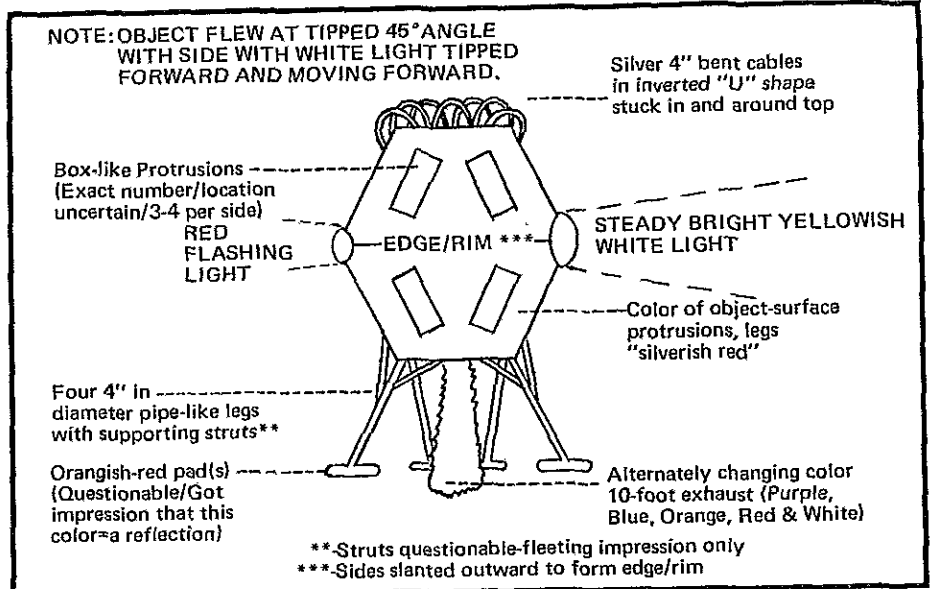
The four youngsters, residents of Canterbury, N.H., were sleeping out beside a barn on the edge of a large open field. Their father had checked on the boys around 9:30 p.m., found them to be safe, and left.

About 10 minutes after the father left, one of the boys, who was observing stars, suddenly shouted to his companions that one of the "stars" appeared to be on fire and heading toward them.

The remaining boys looked up, and, according to Fowler's report, saw a very bright light source descending slowly toward the field. Concurrently they began hearing a sound apparently coming from the object.

They jumped out of their sleeping bags and ran to the edge of the field to get a better view of what they thought was a helicopter coming down. One of the youngsters used his father's flashlight and aimed it at the approaching object.

Then, according to the youngsters, the object did something "very strange": it suddenly and yet very smoothly, "like a



falling, floating balloon," descended in a "sideways, zig-zag" manner.

The object slowed its descent and began to move almost directly over the boys. As it did, they could see with the aid of the flashlight that the object was not a helicopter, and they turned and ran up a dirt road to the home of one of the boys.

The parents, startled by the youngsters and their story about a strange object outside, went to the front door in time to see a slow-moving white-and-red-flashing light moving away at a low altitude over a swamp across the street.

The parents described a sound similar to a jet coming from the direction of the receding light. Neither of the two adults, however, could distinguish a specific shape, according to Fowler's report.

Two other adults questioned about events that night reported hearing an object about the same time, and one of them claims he saw lights and what appeared to be "downward exhaust" coming from the object.

Other witnesses interviewed by Fowler and his group also reported "something strange" in the sky that night but most could not place a time on the sightings. Another resident reported TV interference concurrent with the sighting.

The boys, asked individually to describe the object they had reported, said it looked like an octahedron-shaped object (see sketch) that appeared to be tilted at a 45-degree angle as it moved across the open field. It had four "pipe-like" legs with "round pads" affixed to

the end of each leg. A bright white light on its forward moving side seemed to turn on them, and, according to the witnesses, lit up the chicken coop and the surrounding area.

As the object passed directly over them, they observed a flashing red light on the object's trailing side. A fiery 10-foot-long exhaust appeared beneath the object, according to the youngsters. The exhaust, they reported, seemed to "change colors as if they were switching from one color to another."

The youngsters described a number of bright, silver, inverted U-shaped "cable-like" things sticking into the top of the object.

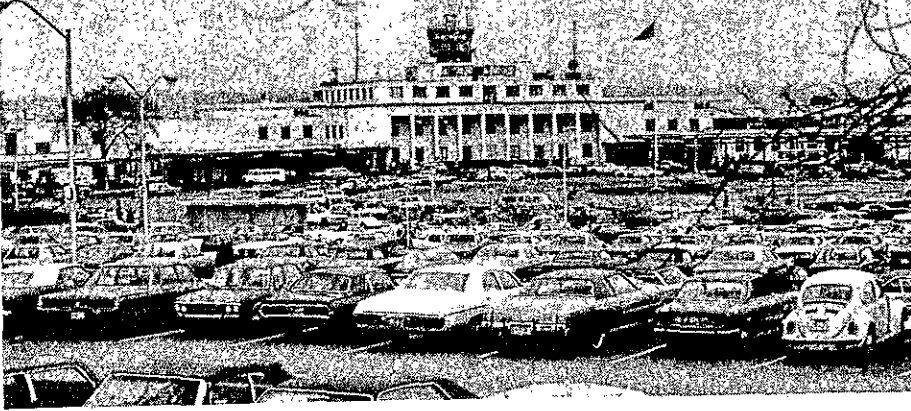
According to the witnesses, the object appeared to pass over them at an altitude of approximately 150 feet. They described its size to be between one and two car-lengths in both height and width.

The young witnesses were questioned, separately and together, and they appeared to be "recounting and reliving a genuine experience accurately," according to the report by investigators.

"Had I not examined this incident personally, I could easily have dismissed the incident as a case of over imaginative boys exaggerating as a helicopter flew over and giving it a Lunar Module description," Fowler summarized in his report.

Fowler stated he tried to run down possible helicopter activity in the area but could find no record of such. "A thorough check was made with Civil, FAA and USAF authorities. There were (See N.H. SIGHTING, page 4)

WASHINGTON NATIONAL REVISITED



JET FLYERS TOLD TO SHOOT DOWN SAUCERS ... THE DAY THE SAUCERS VISITED WASHINGTON, D.C. ... JETS LOSE RACE WITH GLOWING GLOBS . . . These were just a few of the startling headlines the nation's media were using 20 years ago this month.

The incidents they heralded would form a significant new chapter in the UFO chronicle, and would add numerous pages to the Air Force's own inglorious role in the investigation of UFOs.

"No flying saucer report in the history of the UFO ever won more world acclaim than the Washington National sightings," said the late Edward J. Ruppelt in his book, *The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects*.

"Besides being the most highly publicized UFO sightings in the Air Force annals, they were also the most monumentally fouled-up messes that repose in the files," remarked Ruppelt.

It was late Saturday evening, July 19, 1952, and Washington, D. C. was suffering through one of its famous summer heat waves, when suddenly seven strange "pips" appeared on a radar scope at National Airport.

Manning the scope at the time was air traffic controller Edward Nugent. Unable to identify the "pips," Nugent requested that his supervisor, Harry G. Barnes, senior air route traffic controller for the CAA, look at the scope. Barnes later wrote the following account of what happened next:

"Our shift had been on duty about 40 minutes. Eight men were on this particular shift. It was a normal night for both flying and weather. The sky was cloudless, no storms were approaching. Air traffic was light, as usual for that period. I think those facts are important in connection with what came later.

"The 'things' which caused Ed to call me over to the scope were seven pips clustered together irregularly in one corner. The scope is 24 inches in diameter and the pips showed up as pale violet spots . . . The seven pips indicated that the objects — or whatever they were — were in the air over an area about nine

miles in diameter, 15 miles south-southwest of Washington. We knew immediately that a very strange situation existed . . . We tracked the seven pips for about five minutes and quickly determined that they were moving between 100 and 130 miles per hour while we could observe them.

"But their movements were completely radical compared to those of ordinary aircraft. They followed no set course, were not in any formation, and we only seemed to be able to track them for about three miles at a time . . .

"After five minutes of watching the strange pips, I asked Jim Copeland and Jim Ritchey, two experienced radar controllers, to check out our observations. They confirmed our findings. Then I called the airport control tower to see what the radar showed there. The radar operator verified the same thing instantly."

Following that discovery, the tempo and excitement increased as more and more individuals became aware of something strange in the sky above Washington.

Barnes had technicians quickly check out the radar equipment. Satisfied that it was "operating perfectly," Barnes notified the Air Force and informed them what was being observed.

Expecting the Air Force to dispatch jet fighters, Barnes went back to the scope and continued to check with other airport personnel, including inbound pilots, regarding the radar targets. Some of the pilots radioed in that they could see unidentified lights in the night sky, but others reported no visual contacts.

As more minutes passed and no word was forthcoming from the Air Force, operators at nearby Andrews Air Force Base began to pick up strange returns on their radar scopes. The returns correlated with those being received at Washington National.

Ground personnel at National began reporting to the tower and control center a "bright orange light." A commercial airline pilot for Capital Airlines, Captain S. C. Pierman, spotted a "bright light" shortly after take-off. His subsequent

reports coincided with radar pips at National.

Meantime, still no Air Force.

During the next 15 minutes, Captain Pierman continued to report visual sightings, one of which included the observation of six lights. Each "light" coincided with radar reports. Another pilot, approaching National, also confirmed seeing a "light" off his left wing. This was also confirmed by radar personnel.

At approximately 3 a.m., at least three hours after Barnes's call, radar-equipped jet fighters roared in from their Delaware base. Scanning the skies, they reported they saw nothing, and this was confirmed by radar operators on the ground. Finally, after more passes over the area, the planes ran low on fuel and headed back toward their base. The Air Force later denied the planes had been sent.

No sooner had the fighters left when radar blips again began appearing on the National scopes. The sightings, both radar and visual, continued on through the early morning hours, and almost six hours elapsed before the last sighting was reported.

Life magazine summed up the events of that first weekend: "On into the night the ghostly demonstration proceeded. Usually the unknown objects darted over the scope at random, but when an airliner appeared in the area the blips turned up around it. Just before daybreak Barnes wearily observed 10 of the objects at one time, then as commercial air traffic grew heavy, the shaken chief and his cohorts were forced to give up the eerie vigil."

Word leaked out quickly of what had happened, and on Monday morning, newspaper headlines broke the story coast to coast. Hardly had reporters and readers had a chance to react, however, when history repeated itself.

At approximately 9 p.m., Saturday, July 26, radar operators again spotted radar blips on their scopes. There were five or six of them moving in a southerly direction, and again Barnes was called. Barnes, in turn, checked with the airport traffic control tower and Andrews Air Force Base. Once again they confirmed the "unknown" blips.

During the next two hours numerous reports were received by CAA officials. Some came from their own personnel while others came from approaching and departing airliners.

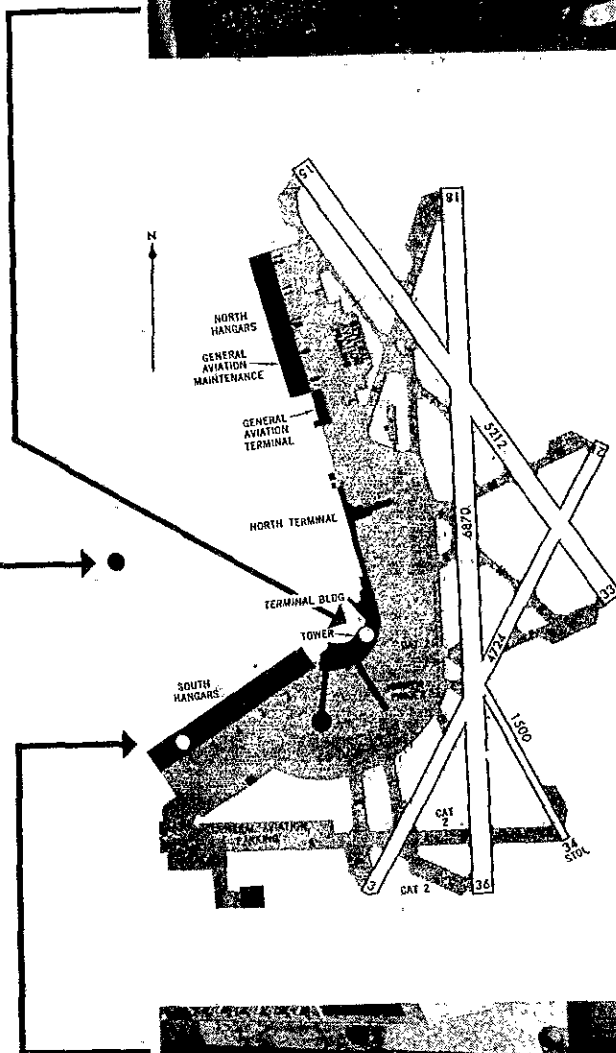
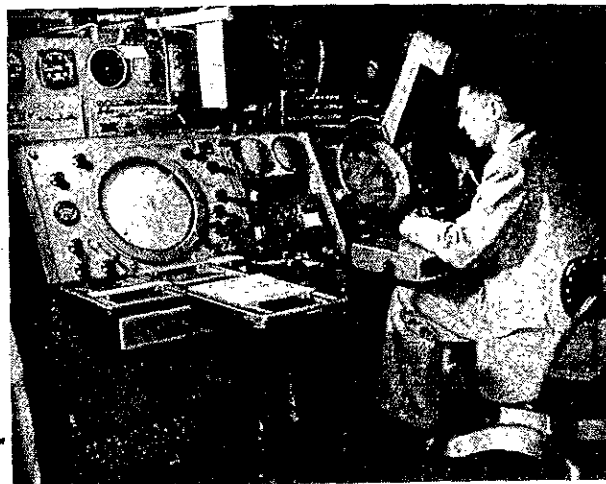
United Airlines Flight 640 reported, "I see a very dim light." The tower reported back, "You are now where the three blips are." Flight 640 replied, "One's here, we got him in sight. He's real pretty." At the same moment officials at Andrews reported to Barnes that they had seen three strange lights streaking across the sky. The reports continued.

After a lapse of approximately two hours, Barnes called officials at the Pentagon. This time, he got results. At 11:25 a

(See Washington Sightings, page 4)

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Washington National's Control Tower radar room (pictured at right) was an exceptionally busy place the night "...SAUCERS VISITED WASHINGTON." Personnel on duty that night, using limited-range radar, verified on numerous occasions the radar sightings of UFOs reported by senior ATC controller Harry Barnes.



The FAA's Air Traffic Control facility, now located in Leesburg, Va., was housed in hangar 6 and equipped with two long-range horizontal scopes. It was in this room (pictured at right) that senior controller Barnes and his crew of eight first spotted "seven strange pips" on their scope. Standing on a hill behind the terminal building is the now abandoned FAA radar platform. The platform (pictured above) stands as a reminder of the 1952 incident and the fact that 20 years later the UFO question remains unanswered.



newsnotes

NICAP STAFFER COMPLETES WESTERN TOUR

After three weeks of hard traveling that took him to the Midwest, Southwest, and West Coast of the United States, NICAP's Executive Director, Stuart Nixon, recently returned to Washington, D.C., from an extended round of personal appearances and talks with numerous NICAP members, scientists, and key figures in the UFO field.

Departing Washington in early May, Nixon first touched down in Hayward, Calif., where he lectured in the new drama center at California State College. On display in the center's lobby was NICAP's recently announced exhibit on UFO photography (*UFO Investigator*, March 1972), which drew favorable reaction from students and faculty alike. Fees from this and later talks enabled the NICAP executive to make the trip.

The following night, May 13, Nixon was in Mountain View, Calif., to address a public gathering in a local high school. The talk was illustrated with slides and included a question-answer session.

Previously that same day, Nixon met with members of the NICAP Bay Area Subcommittee, led by electronics specialist Paul Cerny. In the afternoon, Cerny and Nixon visited well known author-scientist Jacques Vallee, who continues to maintain a strong interest in UFOs. Nixon and Vallee discussed NICAP's computer study, Project ACCESS, and Vallee's own efforts to probe the UFO mystery through use of computer technology.

On Sunday evening, May 14, Nixon appeared at the Palo Alto, Calif., community center, where an enthusiastic audience heard him discuss the history of the UFO problem and how NICAP investigates UFO sightings. A number of NICAP members attended the lecture and had a chance to speak afterward with the NICAP staff head. Both the Mountain View and Palo Alto appearances were arranged too late to permit advance notice in the *UFO Investigator*.

From the Bay Area, Nixon flew to Portland, Ore., for a meeting with administrators of the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI), which hopes to show the NICAP exhibit sometime in the fall of this year. Nixon toured the museum and visited with personnel of the OMSI planetarium, which sponsors shows on life in space and related subjects.

May 16 brought Nixon to Eastern Oregon College in La Grande for a lecture at the school's Hoke Center. A capacity crowd heard Nixon tell why he, as a journalist, is intrigued by the UFO problem and some of the interesting experiences he has had in his six years of association with the UFO field. After the talk, Nixon met informally with a group of students and science professors in a "rap session" on the UFO controversy.

Following several days of rest and sight-seeing, Nixon journeyed to southern California to

visit NICAP's Los Angeles Subcommittee. With Chairman Idabel Epperson and other members of her unit, Nixon spent six days in meetings and conversations discussing the work of NICAP and its current program of corporate development. Nixon also met with several film producers, including personnel of the TV program "You Asked For It," and with newspaper columnist George Todt.

While in Los Angeles, Nixon was a guest on the Hilly Rose late-night talk show on KFI radio, where he spent two hours answering questions from listeners and discussing the UFO problem with host Rose. Several of the people who phoned in, including a man who said he was a police officer, described sightings they had had in the L.A. area.

Other people Nixon talked with in California were Dr. Robert Baker, one of the scientists who testified before the 1968 House symposium on UFOs in Washington, and Ronald Oriti, lecturer at the Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles.

From the land of sun and smog, Nixon traveled to Phoenix, Ariz., where he was the overnight guest of NICAP member William Spaulding. The next day, he continued on to Tucson for an extended visit with the staff of APRO and its directors James and Coral Lorenzen. Details of that visit are reported on the front page of last month's issue.

Next and final stop on Nixon's 7000-mile itinerary was the city of Chicago, where he visited the NICAP Chicago Affiliate and the local Subcommittee. Lengthy discussions were held with both groups concerning their activities and operational problems. On May 30, Nixon and Affiliate Chairman Sherman Larsen met with Dr. Allen Hynek at Northwestern University for an informal talk about Hynek's new book *The UFO Experience* and NICAP's Project ACCESS. Hynek gave the two men a brief tour of Northwestern's Lindheimer Astronomical Research Center.

Washington Sightings

(Continued from page 2)

few minutes after his call, F-94 jet interceptors appeared over Washington.

Air Force pilots, with one exception, reported no sightings, despite the fact that radar show UFOs in their vicinity. One pilot, however, did report a visual sighting of four lights. He attempted for two minutes, at full throttle, to close with the lights but was unsuccessful.

Radar controllers, ground personnel, civilian pilots and a host of other individuals continued to file UFO sighting reports during the next four hours. Finally the blips disappeared and the reports ceased.

The Air Force, anxious to quell the public's anxiety over the sightings, gave a reassuring explanation of the events:

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"There has been no pattern that reveals anything remotely like purpose or remotely like consistency that we can in any way associate with any menace to the United States."

Later, the Air Force announced, "The radar and visual sightings . . . were due to mirage effects created by a double temperature inversion."

These conclusions did not convince all the newsmen who heard them, nor even the radar controllers themselves. As one UPI reporter put it years later, "It must be said . . . that there are persons intimately involved in the July episode, with the events of those ten days still blazing in memory like meteors, who regard the temperature inversion explanation as no explanation."

The late Dr. James McDonald, a meteorologist who personally interviewed the radar operators and examined the Air Force file on the sightings, also rejected the mirage inversion theory. In a statement to newspaper editors in 1967, he said, "The summary analysis of this case that Bluebook still sends out . . . is a verbatim assemblage of the hasty remarks made by frantic officers trying to get the Air Force off the hook in that tight squeeze of July 1952 . . . When I plotted the weather data for July 19, it became quite clear that no anomalous propagation could have produced the solid radar returns so emphatically described to the press by the experienced CAA radarmen on duty that night."

New Hampshire Sighting

(Continued from page 1)

no helicopters or USAF low-flying missions in the area during the date/time-frame. Several minutes prior to the sighting, a jet airliner was seen flying over and easily recognized as such by the four boys."

"The description certainly does not fit the typical oval or cylindrical UFO usually reported, although it is possible that the object was in actuality in the shape of a top which certainly has been reported in the past. They all alluded to an edge or "rim" that went around the object. Both an octahedron and top would exhibit such.

"The multi-colored exhaust and the falling-leaf descent also are typical characteristics of UFOs. One can only speculate what such an object was doing. It would appear that it was going to land, perhaps somewhere in the swamp it was heading over.

"My evaluation of the . . . sighting . . . is that it represents a UFO in the 'Significant Unknown' category," concluded Fowler.